Damage caused by Locusts in Punjab and Haryana

128. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that swarms of locuts have entered several parts of Punjab and Haryana and other parts of the country ;

(b) what steps are contemplated to fight the menace ;

(c) what is the extent of damage caused by the locusts so far ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) During recent locust upsurge from July to October, 1993, 172 locust swarms entered India from Western Border in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Most of the swarms were controlled within the scheduled desert area of Rajasthan and Gujarat. However, a few swarms escaped to Madhya Pradesh and one small swarm to Sirsa District of Haryana.

(b) The following steps were taken to contain the locust menace :—

(i) Mobilisation of manpower, vehicles, pesticides and plant protection equipment.

(ii) Strengthening the existing communication network with the Police wireless sets, vehicle mounted Army wireless sets and installation of additional telephone.

(iii) Deployment of additional vehicles from the State Governments of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh for ensuring the supply net work of insecticides, plant protection equipment, etc., despite the strike of All India truck operators.

(iv) Setting up of control rooms for monitoring the locust situation and control operations.

(v) Constitution of coordination committees at the district, tehsil and sub-tehsil levels.

(vi) Supply of equipment and pesticides to the district authorities, village level committees/farmers.

(vii) Deployment of ground control teams for monitoring locust activity and undertaking control operations in the locust infested areas.

(viii) Deployment of 2 Vayudoot aircrafts and 2 helicopters for aerial application of pesticides. In addition 2 helicopters were deployed by Government of Gujarat.

(ix) Increasing the frequency of Indo-Pak Border meetings for exchanging locust information.

(x) Seeking international assistance through the Food, and Agriculture Organisation for providing consultants, supply of pesticides, plant protection equipment and communication equipment.

(xi) Procurement and placement of additional quantity of pesticides and plant protection equipment.

(xii) Approaching FAO for arranging aircrafts from Bangladesh for supplementing the aerial control capabiltiy.

(c) Although there has been massive locust incursion and breeding in India, the same was neutralised successfully by mounting effective control compaign. As a result, there has been only negligible damage to crops over an area of 1630 ha. in Gujarat, as reported by the State Government.

Loan Sanctioned by IDA for Quake Hit Relief

129. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that IDA has sanctionad a loan of $ 300m for quake hit relief in Maharashtra ;